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Food Information Series
United States Department of Agriculture
Office of Information
Washington 25, D. C.

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FEB 14 1944
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

January 31, 1944 No. 79

Subject: The Farm Equipment and Supplies Outlook

Field Distribution: War Board members, Extension Editors, AAA Committeemen, BAE Analysts, FDA Marketing Reports Chiefs, SCS, FSA, FCA Regional Information Chiefs

Suggested Use: Background Information

Farm Machinery

An analysis of the farm machinery and equipment situation should be prefaced with a resume of problems and events since 1940. That year and 1941 were years of large production. Manufacturers even had a sizable carryover of some items from 1941 to 1942. It is possible to see now how fortunate it was for the nation to go into this war with farms fairly well supplied with equipment. Two years of war in Europe gave farmers of this country a running start, just as it did all manufacturing plants in the United States and Canada.

After Pearl Harbor, raw material allocations for farm equipment and supplies were curtailed. It was necessary to make drastic curtailments in the quantity of steel available for farm machinery and equipment, during the last two calendar quarters of 1942 and the first quarter of 1943. This curtailment, coupled with concentration orders, reduced production of major manufacturers still further and by the second quarter of 1943 new machinery production had virtually stopped. Steel and other materials were going into guns, planes, tanks, ships and a thousand other tools of war.

Meantime, farm labor shortages developed, crop production goals were increased, and old machinery wore out. It was recognized that new power machinery offered one of the best solutions to maintenance of farm production. Accordingly, authorized production during the 12 months, July 1, 1943, to June 30, 1944, was set at about 80 percent of the 1940 base output of farm implements. The 80 percent figure is an overall one for allocated raw materials and does not apply to individual items. This authorized production for domestic use in 1944 is double the authorized production for 1943. However, since manufacturers were permitted by the 1944-production-year order to complete unfinished quotas authorized for the preceding year, the total authorized amount of machinery (all of which can be used to plant, till or harvest this year's crops) is approximately 100 percent of the 1940 machinery output. Recalling the quantity of machinery manufactured in 1940, this fact should relieve doubts and fears concerning the machinery production program. Officials of the War Food Administration, claimant agency for agriculture, and those of the War Production Board, which allocates critical war materials, caution the civilian public to remember that the country is still up to its ears in a life and death war, that the manufacture of items for domestic use competes directly with war equipment. In the light of broad war strategy --

which holds that fighting men shall have first call on national resources -- the allocations of material for farm equipment and supplies in 1944 seem liberal indeed.

In the fourth quarter of 1942 agriculture was given 87,000 tons of carbon and alloy steel for farm equipment. By the fourth quarter of 1943, this had been increased to more than 317,000 tons, and this figure was again increased for the first quarter of 1944 to more than 362,000 tons. (These figures are for farm machinery only. Allocations for other War Food Administration needs run the total to more than 862,000 tons for the first quarter of 1944).

How well these raw materials are being turned into farm machinery may be seen in the increased production of certain groups of machinery, as shown in the tabulation that follows. Note that both 1942-43 and 1943-44 authorized production is given in percentage of production of the same equipment in the base year, 1940. While data in the table excludes authorizations for repair parts, the manufacture of such parts is entirely unrestricted and production is currently more than 160 percent of 1940.

The 1943 and 1944 Farm Machinery Programs Compared with 1940, by Groups
(Excluding Repairs)

Description	Farm Machinery Program as Percentage of 1940	
	1943 percent	1944 percent
Soil preparation, planting, cultivating, fertilizing and spraying equipment	30	79
Harvesting and haying equipment and farm elevators	69	125
Wagons, farm trucks (not motor trucks) irrigation equipment, pumps and windmills	40	92
Dairy, poultry, barn and miscellaneous equipment	74	86
Tractors, wheel type	33	58
Total	45.7	87

Wheel Tractors

Meeting the current wheel tractor production quota is difficult, because of direct competition with military equipment. To a large extent, farm implement manufacturers have turned their plants to the making of military trucks, bull-dozers, landing craft, and similar items. This battle equipment uses many of the same components required by tractors,

combines and other heavy farm equipment. Axle assemblies, engine blocks carburetors, thermostats and a hundred other gadgets for military equipment come from the same plants that make the same components for farm machines. So long as Allied soldiers, knocking at Hitler's gates, or those whittling away at the Japs in the Pacific, need that equipment first, national policy will give it to them with no argument from reasonable persons in the farm sector at home.

Nevertheless, accelerated production by leading tractor makers promises that the 1943-44 quota will be reached. The production scheduled between July 1, 1943, and June 30, 1944, approximates or exceeds the wheel tractor production of every year during the 13 year period 1927-39, inclusive, excepting only 1937. Production of crawler-type tractors for non-military uses is inadequate because of military demands for this type of equipment but the supply of repair parts for these tractors is steadily improving.

There was an unavoidable delay in getting plants back into gear, for making farm equipment, last summer. Materials were allocated in June but there was a time lag of three to six months before production got into full swing. For example, wheeled tractor production in the January-March quarter of 1943 was only 15,550. This increased to more than 18,000 in the second quarter, to 32,939 in the third quarter, and to 56,573 in the last quarter. More than 20,000 tractors were built in December alone, as compared to 4,200 in December of 1942. The current rate of production is sufficiently high to complete the production of 209,000 wheeled tractors authorized for the period July 1, 1943, to June 30, 1944. Production is being dispatched in every possible manner by War Production Board Specialists at all the major manufacturing plants, where the war food program is regarded as second only to prime military equipment.

Although more than twice as much new farm machinery will be available in 1944 as last year, the output is not expected to satisfy the demand, lumping all items together. The situation calls for repair and maintenance of implements on a wide scale again in 1944. Repair parts are expected to be available in ample quantity, with the possible exception of a few of the critical component type which may be somewhat tight. That is why maintenance was emphasized continually in this winter's educational work.

The foregoing discussion gives in some detail the story of heavier machinery and equipment, production of which is more critical, as a whole, than is the case with miscellaneous items of farm supply. While it is not possible to discuss fully the supply situation of thousands of items, a resume of typical groups is given here briefly:

Merchant Trade Products (Steel Goods)

Dealers are permitted to order merchant trade items in amounts equivalent to sales of stock. Production of these items is large and, with the possible exception of steel roofing and poultry netting, supply should be good.

Fencing: Barbed wire and woven wire are being produced in quantities equal to the highest level of production prior to the war. The supply situation is better than it was during 1942 and the first few months of 1943 and should continue to improve.

Poultry Netting: Being produced in large amounts but due to military demands the supply for civilian use is likely to continue to be somewhat less than demand.

Steel Roofing: Supply will probably continue to be less than demand, but should be greater in 1944 than the 1943 supply.

Bale Ties, Nails, Staples and Pipe: Supply should be ample during 1944.

Water Systems: There is still a fair supply of shallow well pumps. Deep well pumps are more critical. Supplies of both, however, will be greater than in 1943.

Other Items: The supply of farm and garden hand tools should be adequate, since production is at record levels. Mechanics hand tools (including wrenches) will probably continue to be in short supply during the war period. While production is high, military demand for use with mechanized equipment is great.

Twine and Rope

Binder Twine: Stocks are fair from 1943 carryover which includes some cotton yarn core twine and minimum quantities of all sisal twine. Additional 1944 requirements will consist of a combination henequen and jute twine. Exhaustive laboratory and field tests indicate this type of twine to be entirely satisfactory if mechanical binders are kept in accurate adjustment. For field hand tying the twine is completely acceptable.

Rope: Lariat rope will be largely manufactured from sisal which will provide entirely satisfactory results. Hay rope will be processed from jute and quantities of istle to provide additional strength. Rope for miscellaneous farm purposes will be largely manufactured from jute; however, some sisal rope will be available as a carryover from 1943.

All balances of 100 percent manila rope are under direct allocation to the Armed Services.

Dairy Equipment

Supplies of milk cans, strainers, filter discs and flannel squares are believed to be ample. Production schedules are being met by manufacturers. Milk pails are authorized at 122 percent of the 1940 production, and milk strainers are authorized at 93 percent of the 1940 production.

Milking Machines: The quota authorized for milking machine production is 140 percent of 1940. Production schedules are being met by the manufacturers. In addition to the production authorized for 1944 the quota author-

ized last year and not manufactured is carried over and will also be produced by July 1944. A substantially larger number of machines will be available than was available last year.

Milk Coolers: A substantial increase in the production of milk coolers has been authorized. It is believed production schedules will be met. More coolers will be available than were available last year.

Poultry Equipment

Brooders: Brooder production is authorized at 140 percent of the 1940 production. Brooders will be available in greater numbers than last year.

Flats and Fillers are plentiful. Every attempt is being made to provide egg cases, both wood and fibre. Situation is exceedingly tight. Adequacy of supply dependent upon maximum re-use.

Paint

Exterior Paint: May be slightly poorer quality after present stocks are exhausted. The new paint will use more thinner and linseed, by government specification.

Interior Paint: Supplies are ample.

Boxes, Baskets and Crates

Apple Boxes: Unless apple growers order ahead now, fewer boxes can be put out. Total supply of new boxes and baskets not equal to anticipated demand of large expected crop. Apple growers and packers should buy every available used basket and box, beginning now. Crates in the same category.

Automotive Supplies

Motor Oils and Greases: Lubricants, oils and greases are ample.

Auto Batteries: Ample to meet all farm needs. Spark plug supply somewhat restricted.

Tire Chains: Good passenger car tire chains scarce. Truck chains in limited supply. Cross chains and repair parts are available in ample quantities.

Tires and Tubes: Few Prewar OPA Grade I passenger tires remain - anywhere. Production of synthetic OPA Grade I passenger tires increases slowly. OPA (Dec 1) reclassified all War Reclaim tires as Grade III - but overall supplies are very small. Synthetic passenger car tire quality better than originally expected. Recapped old tires are better than new synthetic tires -- hence, recap everything available in the way of truck and implement tires. No restriction whatever on recapping.

Fertilizers

Mixed Fertilizers: Supplies of materials are expected to be ample for mixed fertilizer although potash will be about 10 percent short of last year. Labor supply in fertilizer plants is critical and not more than half of the normal tonnage can move in the spring. Unless shipments of mixed fertilizer move regularly through the winter, farmers may not have it when they need it.

Superphosphate: Supplies ample now but may be short of the demand at planting time. Supply, 1944, seven million tons compared with 5.8 million tons in 1943.

Nitrate of Soda: Expectations are for about 100 percent of last year's tonnage from importations and domestic production.

Sulphate of Ammonia: None for direct application. All to be used for fertilizer mixing. Supply adequate.

Ammonium Nitrate: Expected to be plentiful -- depends on demand for small grains and cover crops.

Cyanamid: There will be little if any available.

Potash: Allocated by WPB on basis of last year's use. Some high potash grades of mixed fertilizer have been discontinued to stretch the supply.

Sprays and Dusts

Lead and Calcium: Supplies about same as last year. Early orders desirable.

Sulphur: Plenty in Texas but it must be moved north by rail rather than boat. Drums for lime sulphur are not too plentiful.

Copper Sulphate: Allocations for agricultural use about the same as last year. Order supplies early.

Yellow Cuprocide: Definitely limited. Entire production of cuprous oxide has been requisitioned by the Navy for at least three months.

Nicotine: Still plentiful.

Oil Sprays: Adequate if there are drums.

Rotenone: Government agencies optimistic on supply for 1944 but inventories are still very low. Supply will be twice as large as in 1943 but not large enough for all demands.

Pyrethrum: Only limited supplies low grade material expected for agriculture this year. Suitable substitutes available.

Mixed Dusts: There will be some new dusts substituted again this year, but variety for all insects and quantity for all essential needs should be available.

Sprayers and Dusters: Limited supply but situation greatly improved.

Lime Products

Ground Limestone: Still plentiful in some areas but all quarries are having difficulties keeping the heavy equipment in repair and keeping enough help to operate it. Total production will be off probably 20 to 25 percent.

Hydrated Lime: Production uncertain. Recommend buying early.

Spray Lime: Producers are trying hard to meet demand an may do so if they can ship enough during the winter.